

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 IO-13 A-01 AID-05

CCO-00 DHA-02 OC-06 OMB-01 OPR-02 SCS-03 SCA-01

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O P 161227Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 61

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

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CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 6945

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

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SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION AUG 15-16: CHRISTIANS MAY HOPE FINESSE

METN CAMPAIGN; GEMAYEL SPEAKS OF "DECENTRALIZATION"; FRANGIE MAY  
YET DUMP KARAME

REF: BEIRUT 6933

1. SUMMARY: CHRISTIAN METN OFFENSIVE INCREASINGLY A  
THREAT, BUT LITTLE GROUND ACTION SO FAR, AS CHRISTIANS  
APPARENTLY HOPE PERSUADE PALESTINIANS GIVE UP AREA  
POSITIONS VOLUNTARILY. HEAVY ARTILLERY ACTIVITY IN BEIRUT  
AND GROUND FIGHTING AROUND GALERIE SEMAAN. SMALL  
CHRISTIAN ATTACKS OUTSIDE TRIPOLI. LAA COMMANDER IN SOUTH  
IMPRISONED AFTER HE DENOUNCED AND ATTEMPTED TAKE OVER  
ORGANIZATION. RIGHTISTS CLAIM ISRAELIS HAVE ALREADY STOPPED  
SIX BOATS ATTEMPTING REACH SIDON AND TYRE. ARAB LEAGUE  
DEPUTY OFF TO CAIRO, VIA DAMASCUS, AS CALLS GROW FOR  
ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT. LOCAL MILITARY LEVEL PLO-  
PHALANGE-AL DISCUSSIONS ON NEUTRAL ZONES CONTINUE.  
PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS REASSERT DETERMINATION TO  
FIGHT. RENEWED SPECULATION FRANGIE MAY DUMP  
KARAME, PERHAPS EVEN TO FORCE RUPTURE OF REMAINING  
GOVERNMENTAL APPARATUS. GEMAYEL SPEAKS OF  
"DECENTRALIZATION." JUNBLATT SAYS IMPOSSIBLE, AND  
CALLS FOR "POPULAR WAR" AGAINST PARTITION  
"CONSPIRACY." NEW LIBYAN BOY IN TOWN. IMPACT OF NEW  
SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER CONTROLS NOT YET CLEAR.  
EAST-WEST BEIRUT TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION ALMOST  
NONEXISTENT. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SITUATION. METN CAMPAIGN. RADIO AMCHITE  
IS ADVERTISING BEGINNING OF CAMPAIGN TO LIBERATE  
MOUNTAINS WITH OFFENSIVES AGAINST SANNINE, MTEIN AND  
AINTOURA, AND PALESTINIAN SOURCES REPORT HEAVY  
FIGHTING, BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION THAT GROUND  
MOVEMENTS HAVE ACTUALLY BEGUN. HEAVY ARTILLERY  
DUELS ARE TAKING PLACE IN AREA. CHRISTIAN THREATS MAY  
BE RELATED TO EFFORTS PERSUADE PALESTINIANS GIVE UP  
AREA VOLUNTARILY (SEE PARAS 5 AND 6 BELOW).

3. BEIRUT AREA. VERY HEAVY ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENTS  
IN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT, ESPECIALLY AT MOUSEITBE  
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AND RAS BEIRUT, INCLUDING THREE OR FOUR ROUNDS ON  
AUB CAMPUS NIGHT OF AUG 14-15. HEAVIEST FIGHTING ON  
GROUND AROUND GALERIE SEMAAN, WITH USE OF ARMORED  
VEHICLES FOR FIRE SUPPORT, BUT NO CHANGE IN POSITIONS.  
RIGHTISTS CLAIM PALESTINIANS APPLYING HEAVY PRESSURE  
ON THEIR POSITIONS IN VICINITY OF MUSEUM, CHAYLA, AND  
AIN EL-RUMMANNEH. HEAVY PALESTINIAN ARTILLERY FIRE  
AGAINST AREAS AROUND TELL ZAATAR. HEAVY FIRE FIGHTS

IN CENTRAL CITY AREA. LEFTIST SOURCES SPECULATE CHRISTIANS MAY BE PLANNING OFFENSIVES AGAINST HOTEL DISTRICT AND/OR AGAINST AIRPORT. CHRISTIANS HELD LARGE TELL ZAATAR VICTORY PARADE AUG 14 IN ASHRAFIEH AND PUT CAPTURED WEAPONS ON DISPLAY. PHALANGE AND RED CROSS COOPERATED TO EVACUATE SOME 100 TELL ZAATAR COMBATANTS TO WEST BEIRUT AUG 14, ACCORDING TO RIGHTIST SOURCES. PALESTINIANS SAY THEY HAVE PLANS TO BUILD NEW REFUGEE CAMP, AT DAMOUR TO HOUSE TELL ZAATAR EVACUEES.

4. MILITARY SITUATION ELSEWHERE. REST OF COUNTRY CONTINUES FAIRLY QUIET. RIGHTISTS SAY THEY BEGINNING SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SOUTHERN OUTSKIRTS OF TRIPOLI. LEFTISTS SAY THEY HAVE REPULSED CHRISTIAN ATTACKS AT BEIT AUKER AND ALMA. USUAL SHELLING BETWEEN TRIPOLI AND ZGHORTA CONTINUES. IN SOUTH, PALESTINIANS/LEFTISTS CLAIM BEING SHELLED BY SYRIANS AROUND JEZZINE. AS-SAFIR CLAIMS SOME 400 JORDANIAN TROOPS HAVE ARRIVED AT JEZZINE. AFTER DENUNCIATION OF LAA SOUTHERN COMMANDER MAJOR AHMED BOUTARI (SITREP AUG 14), HE ATTEMPTED COUP, WHICH FAILED. HE THEN ATTEMPTED GET ON BOAT TO CYPRUS, BUT WAS APPREHENDED. ALSO REMOVED WITH BOUTARI ON 13TH WERE HIS DEPUTY, MAJOR MRAD, AND LAA G-2, MAJOR SAAD, BOTH OF WHOM REPORTEDLY DEEPLY INVOLVED IN FINANCIAL SCANDAL. FOLLOWING REPORTS FROM ISRAEL OF INCREASED ISRAELI ATTEMPTS TO BLOCKAGE PORTS OF TYRE AND SIDON, RADIO AMCHITE EARLY AUG 16 CLAIMS ISRAELIS HAVE ALREADY DETAINED SIX SHIPS.

5. ARAB LEAGUE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. AS ARAFAT AND JUNBLATT ON ONE HAND, AND GOVERNMENTS OF SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT ON THE OTHER, CALL FOR NEW ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT MEETING, AL DEPUTY KHOLI STOPPED OFF

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IN DAMASCUS WHERE HE MET PRESIDENT ASSAD AND PRIME MINISTER KHULAYFAWI, AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS. HE REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED ACTIVATION OF QUADRIPARTITE CEASEFIRE COMMITTEE AND EFFORTS TO ARRANGE PEACEFUL EVACUATION OF METN AREA. IN CAIRO HE IS EXPECTED TO SUPPORT PROPOSAL FOR ARAB SUMMIT, AND TO PROMOTE IDEA OF 10,000-MAN ARAB LEAGUE DETERRENT FORCE IN LEBANON. HE IS EXPECTED BACK IN BEIRUT AUG 19. IN CONTEXT OF PHALANGIST STATEMENTS IN FAVOR OF CANTONIZATION (SEE PARA 9 BELOW), KHOLI SPOKE AGAINST IDEA OF PARTITION, WHICH, HE SAYS, IS AT ODDS WITH LEBANESE TRADITION. ALSO WEAKENING ARAB LEAGUE-KFOWR FRONT RELATIONS, PRESIDENT FRANGIE HAS DECIDED TO IGNORE LATEST MESSAGE FROM AL SEC GEN

RIAD (IN WHICH RIAD TOLD FRANGIE TO ADDRESS HIS COMPLAINTS ABOUT ARAB LEAGUE FORCES IN FIRST INSTANCE TO DR. KHOLI), AND NOTED THAT KHOLI HAS NEVER RESPONDED TO HIS COMPLAINTS ABOUT ACTIVITIES OF LIBYAN TROOPS IN LEBANON IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINIANS.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 USIE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1516

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 62

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

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6. PHALANGE-PLO-AL MILITARY CONTACTS. AL COMMANDER GHONEIM MET WITH PHALANGE LEADERS AT ASHRAFIEH AUG 15. GHONEIM REPORTEDLY PRESENTED PALESTINIAN PLAN SUPPOSEDLY PREPARED BY ARAFAT HIMSELF, FOR CEASEFIRE  
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AND ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION. PHALANGE (ALEXANDER GEMAYEL) REPORTEDLY RESPONDED THAT PALESTINIANS MUST FIRST WITHDRAW FROM METN. RIGHTIST RADIO CLAIMS PALESTINIANS HAVE IN FACT AGREED TO PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL FROM MOUNTAINS IN NEXT FEW DAYS. TWO SIDES REPORTEDLY AGREED ON STEPS TOWARD STATIONING ARAB LEAGUE FORCES IN BUFFER ZONES. BESHIR GEMAYEL AND ARAFAT MAY MEET AUG 16 TO DISCUSS METN.

7. PALESTINIANS/LEFTISTS REAFFIRM DETERMINATION. LARGE MEETING AT STRAND CINEMA IN WEST BEIRUT AUG 15 FEATURED NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN AND LEFTIST SPEAKERS. ABU IYAD ATTACKED SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT AS INTENDED TO KIKUIDATE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT AND CRITICIZED USSR AS WELL FOR INDIFFERENCE. INAAM RAAD, PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL SYRIAN PARTY (WHICH SPONSORED MEETING) SPOKE OF PLOT TO "CYPRIOTIZE" LEBANON, AND ATTACKED ROLE OF SHIITE IMAM MUSA SADR AT NABAA.

8. DUMP KARAME? WIDE SPECULATION IN BEIRUT THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE MAY SEEK DISPLACE PRIMIN KARAME IN NEXT FEW DAYS. L'ORIENT SAYS HE BEING DETERRED BY OPPOSITION OF PIERRE GEMAYEL, WHO BELIEVES MOVE WOULD LEAD TO DEFINITE RUPTURE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MODERATE MOSLEMS, AND BECAUSE REPLACEMENT STILL BEING SOUGHT. AL-MUHARRIR SPECULATES THAT FRANGIE MAY INDEED WANT TO RUPTURE GOVERNMENT, SO THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS CANNOT TAKE CHARGE OF ANYTHING VIABLE AT END OF SEPTEMBER, THUS PREPARING WAY FOR "CANTONIZATION" OF LEBANON.

9. PHALANGE VIEWS. PIERRE GEMAYEL HAS MADE SEVERAL STATEMENTS IN RECENT DAYS SUGGESTING THAT COMPLETE REUNIFICATION OF LEBANON IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE. HE FAVORS "DECENTRALIZATION" SUCH AS FOUND IN MANY DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, AND "UNITY IN PLURALITY." BECHIR GEMAYEL SAYS PHALANGIST OBJECTIVE IS TO PRESERVE LEGALITY, AND INVITES ALL LEBANESE TO UNDERTAKE DIALOGUE TO ASSURE THAT POWER IS LEGALLY TRANSFERRED ON SEPT 23.

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10. OTHER POLITICAL VOICES. JUNBLATT SPEAKS AGAINST CANTONICATION AS ALIEN TO LEBANESE TRADITION, AND HIS NATIONAL MOVEMENT ISSUED STATEMENT TO EFFECT THAT TIME FOR COMPROMISES IS PAST AND THAT "POPULAR WAR" AGAINST KFOUR AND SYRIAN CONSPIRACY IS ONLY POSSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION. ONE SOURCE SAYS THAT NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIPS ARE SEEKING DEVISE FORMULA FOR BROAD "NATIONAL FRONT MOVEMENT" WHICH WILL UNITE THEM WITH "ISLAMIC GROUP," EDDE'S "NATIONAL UNITY FRONT," AND NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT PERSONALITIES. MINISTER OF ECONOMY OSSEIRAN SAYS PRIVATELY THAT HE, IMAM MUSA SADR, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE KAMIL ASSAD, AND DEPUTY KAZIM AL KHALIL ARE NOW ALL SUPPORTING NEWFANGLED "SECRET SHIITE ORGANIZATION."

11. LIBYAN VISITOR. LIBYAN UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ABU ZAID OMAR DOUWARDA ARRIVED IN BEIRUT AUG 15, WITH THREE POINT PROPOSITION: SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL; PROMPT MEETING OF QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE, AND NEW SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN MEETING. HE SAID HE WAS FOR LEBANESE UNITY, STRENGTH OF PALESTINAIN RESISTANCE, AND PRESERVATION OF LEBANESE "NATIONALIST FORCES."

12. SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER. LEBANESE DIRGEN OF SECURITY, COLONEL ANTOINE DAHDAH, RETURNED FROM DAMASCUS TO JOUNIEH AUG 15 WITH AGREEMENT WITH SYRIANS THAT LEBANESE AUTHORITIES SHOULD ESTABLISH TWO POINTS OF ISSUE FOR TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION TO SYRIA: AT ZAHLE AND AT MASSNA (ON BORDER ITSELF). BOTH POINTS ARE IN SYRIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY. PHALANGE LEADER MICHAEL SAMAHA, ALSO RETURNING FROM DAMASCUS, SAID THAT NEW SYRIAN CONTROL MEANSURES WERE AT INSTIGATION OF SYRIAN MINISTER OF INTERIRO DABBAGH, WHO WANTS TO CONTROL LARGE VOLUME OF LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN MIGRATION TO SYRIA. WE DO NOT YET KNOW HOW NEW CONTROLS WILL AFFECT TRAVEL OF PERSONS AND SUPPLIES BETWEEN WEST BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS.

13. BEIRUT TELEPHONES. SINCE FALL OF TELL ZAATAR FIVE DAYS AGO, TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN  
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EAST AND WEST BEIRUT HAS BEEN CUT, EXCEPT THROUGH TWO LOCAL EXCHANGES WHICH STRADDLE CITY CONFRONTATION LINE. INTERRUPTION PRESUMABLY DONE BY FATAH, WHICH

CONTROLS TELEPHONE EXCHANGES, BUT MOTIVATION NOT  
CLEAR.  
HUNT

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** MILI, PINS, PINT, LE  
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